

A
Practical Discourse
Concerning
REPENTANCE,
And the
NATURE
OF THE
Christian Religion.

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near *Nottingham*.

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THE
REPUBLICAN

OF THE

STATE OF NEW YORK

FOR THE YEAR 1850

AND FOR THE YEAR 1851

AND FOR THE YEAR 1852

AND FOR THE YEAR 1853

AND FOR THE YEAR 1854

AND FOR THE YEAR 1855

AND FOR THE YEAR 1856

AND FOR THE YEAR 1857

T O

My much Honoured Lord, and
Noble Benefactor,

The Right Honourable,

A N D

Right Reverend Father in GOD,

H E N R Y,

L^d Bishop of L O N D O N,

One of the

Lords of Their Majesties most
Honourable Privy-Council, &c.

My LORD,

T H E incomparable Good-
ness and Affability your
Lordship useth towards all, not

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ex-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

excepting the meanest Persons, encourageth me humbly to lay at your Lordship's Feet, this plain Practical Discourse, which as I have had the comfort to understand that they were edified, who heard it, so I hope it may be of farther use, when more leisurely considered, and perhaps may serve to give the common sort of People a clearer and more distinct Notion than they usually have, of their indispensable Duty, and of that wise and holy Religion which they profess.

The zeal of doing something towards this, before I die, according to my little Sphere, made me desirous to leave this Discourse with my Parishioners. It would be indeed an unspeakable satisfaction to me, if it prove any advantage

The Epistle Dedicatory.

vantage to them ; but chiefly, if your Lordship might condescend so far as to accept it, as a Token of my most humble and hearty Gratitude (instead of what I should, but am not able to perform) for the great and many Obligations laid upon my Relations, and my self in particular, for which we shall ever stand indebted to your Lordship.

My Lord,

Your Lordship , and all the World knows it very well, hath not only been ready upon all Occasions to assert and maintain, even with the most eminent danger of your Life, your Country's most admirable Laws and Reformation ; but has been a common Father to all the Persecuted of

A 3

France,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

*France, who were forc'd to flee
from their Native Country.*

*How many Souls can declare
to the World, and shall testifie at
the Great Day, before our blessed
Lord and his holy Angels, to
your Lordship's immortal Glory,
that they have tasted of no other
Bread in this their Distress, but
that which your Lordship did put
into their hands ! There my Fa-
ther will stand, with his Family,
in the fore-front of that vast
multitude of the Witnesses of your
Lordship's unbounded Charity ;
and we shall thereby convince the
World, that Christianity was not
then lost among Men.*

In

The Epistle Dedicatory.

*In the mean while, my Lord,
I submit my self wholly, and this
little Treatise, to your Lordship,
assuring your Lordship it is meant
candidly, and purely for God's
Glory, and the Salvation of Souls,
proceeding from a sincerely peni-
tent Heart, having studied no-
thing so much as this Subject, these
several Years, in which I have
so often been in a state of dy-
ing.*

*I shall add no more, but this,
That the chiefeſt Blessing I shall
always ask of G O D; and my
chiefeſt Happineſſ the remainder
of my Life, will be to see God's
Glory further'd, and your Noble
House, my Lord, and Yourself
in particular, prosper and flou-
rish, to the Honour and Felicity
of this Church and Nation.*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

*I humbly beg your Lordship's
Blessing. I am,*

My LORD,

Your Lordship's

Most Humble, most Dutiful,

and most Obliged Servant,

A. LORTIE.

A

A
Practical Discourse

Concerning

REPENTANCE, &c.

JOH N the Baptist came Preaching, as we read, *Mat. 3. 1, 2.* and saying, *Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

That was the Voice that cried before the ~~the~~ *Gah, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths streight, Luk. 3. 4.*

And at the eighth Verse of that Chapter, we learn what was to be done in order to that, *viz.*

A 5 to

to Repent, without any further excuse, upon no account whatsoever.

Repentance indeed is a Duty incumbent upon all Men, seeing all have sinned, and therefore must certainly be for ever undone, except they Repent.

As the World goes, it is a Duty to be insisted upon at all times. But if it be specially call'd for at some Seasons more than others, it is surely in times of Publick Humiliation, when we address our selves to God, or he addresses himself to us, and whensoever we are call'd to renew our Engagements to Religion.

All we can do without it, is but Hypocrisie, and a meer mocking of Almighty God.

John the Baptist, it seems, esteem'd it the true and only Preparative

parative for the Christian Religion: *Repent ye*, says he, *for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*.

All Men are therefore highly concern'd to have a right Notion of Repentance; otherwise they can never be good Christians.

I shall endeavour to shew, in the following Discourse,

I. What Repentance is.

II. What is the Nature of the Christian Dispensation, which is call'd the Kingdom of Heaven.

III. What reason there was to Repent, the Kingdom of Heaven being at hand; and what reason then there is now we should Repent.

And IV. I shall represent what manner of Persons are the Subjects of this heavenly Kingdom; that we may know assuredly, whether we are such, or not; that

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that if we are, we may praise God for it, and continue to be so ; and if we are not, we may see what is to be done to become such.

Then, I shall draw some Inferences from the whole.

First, What Repentance is.

For there are too many in the World, take that for Repentance which indeed is no such thing ; their Hearts being evil, and therefore willing to substitute any thing in its room, to be excused from it.

But God is not mocked ; and their very Consciences, were they permitted to speak, would cry aloud against them, for their unpardonable blindness and folly, in mistaking so easily, if not wilfully, in so clear and plain a matter.

Some

Some fancy a sence of Sin to be Repentance. That is, if they are but sensible that they have done what ought not to have been done ; that they are miserable Sinners, and that Sin is a most wretched and odious thing, which 'twere good never to be guilty of: I say, if they do but feel themselves sensible of all this, then they think they are well enough, and are so presumptuous as to hope well of their state, tho' they still continue in their sins.

Others, something more modest, do not think it sufficient to have a bare sence of sin, if withal they do not entertain a hearty sorrow for it. But if they do but grieve and weep for their sins, they question not but they have made full amends for them, altho' they grow never the better,
but

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but still sin on, still complaining and sorrowing for their sins, and bemoaning their infirmities.

But others yet come nearer to the business ; for to all this they will add vows, and resolutions, and endeavours.

They are not only sensible that they have done those things which they ought not to have done ; they are not only heartily sorry for it, but they formallie good resolutions against sin ; they vow they will endeavour with all their might never to fall into the same temptations, never to commit the faults they have been guilty of, never to yield to their lusts again ; and perhaps they endeavour, and that more than once. Why, these, all these, are steps towards Repentance. But I must tell ye, as I shall answer it at the great Day of the Lord,
all

all these yet are not Repentance ; if we go no further than this, we do not truly repent, we die in our sins, and our iniquities shall inevitably be our ruine.

Say not, you have wept sore, you have grieved bitterly, and perhaps fasted often, have shun'd the temptation, and avoided the ill company, and resisted your lusts as much as ever you could.

These were excellent means : but if we have not overcome our sins, if we commit the same faults still ; what are we the better ? What we have done is ineffectual, we are not then in a state of Repentance.

What doth it avail to strive to enter in at the straight Gate, if Men do not actually enter in thereat ? For many seek to enter in, and yet do not, as we read, *Luke 13. 24.*

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Ye did run well ; who did hinder you ? Gal. 5. 7.

So run, that ye may obtain,
1 Cor. 9. 24.

When it repented the Lord that he had made man, he said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth, both man and beast ; for it repenteth me that I have made them, Gen. 6. 6, 7.

And as the Lord said, so he did. He had not truly repented to have made 'em, if he had not destroyed them.

For to repent, is not barely to wish that what is done, had not been done, but to take quite contrary measures, and undo, as far as we repent, and as much as we are able, that we had done before.

We read, *Luke 19. 8.* when *Zacheus*, the unjust Publican, repented

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pented, he made full restitution of all he had got unjustly ; that is, he entred into a quite opposite course to his former practices : He said to our Saviour, as soon as he was converted, *Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken any thing from any man, I restore him four-fold.*

When the Prophet *Isaiah* exhorts the People of *Israel* to Repentance, he bids them, *Cease to do evil, and learn to do good, Isai. I. 17, 18. Wash ye, make you clean, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment, and relieve the oppressed.*

God himself teacheth us what it is to repent, when he says in *Ezekiel*, *If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity, he*

he shall surely live, Ezek. 33.

15.

And *John the Baptist* taught also plainly enough, that neither fair Promises, holy Vows, and good Resolutions, nor even a bare Cessation of evil, make up Repentance; when he charged the Pharisees and Sadduces, that came to his Baptism, to *bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance. Mat. 3. 8.* As if (like *St. James*, concerning Faith, *Jam. 2. 18.*) he had bid them shew their Repentance, and prove it to be right and true, real and sincere, by good Works, and a holy Life.

To the Publicans he said, *Exact no more than that which is appointed you.* And to the Souldiers, *Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages, Luke 3. 13, 14.*

And

And at the eleventh Verse of the same Chapter, he says to all them that came to be baptized of him : *He that has two coats, let him impart to him that has none ; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise.*

That was his Doctrine : and that's the Doctrine of *Repentance*. That is, in short, as if he had said, *Forsake those sins you have been guilty of, be sure you commit them not again, but lead godly lives in all vertue and honesty : Learn to practice Charity, which is the sum of the Divine Laws ; and then you are right Penitents.*

But this is no more than what our own Consciences dictate to us. I'll refer it to any one that is a Father, and has an undutiful Son ; or to him that hath an Enemy.

The

The Father exhorts his Son to leave off his wicked Courses, and return to his Duty ; promising upon those Terms to be very good and kind to him.

You agree with your Enemy, (on Condition that all old Quarrels and Animosities shall be forgotten, and he shall carry himself civilly towards you for the future) to be Friends with him again, to pardon him, and to love him.

Now, if either such a Son, or such an Enemy, after a long Complement ; and many repeated Protestations of Sorrow for what's past, and as many Vows and Promises of a better Behaviour for the time to come : If, after all this, I say, they fell to their old ways, and grew never a jot the better, would you seriously say they have repented ?

If

If you could not say it, why then will you say that you repent, when yet you find no change, no amendment in you?

Let this teach us what Repentance is; for, sure, Repentance towards God is not of another nature, nor ought to be less than that we would expect from an Enemy, or a rebellious Child.

Away then with all these Pretenders to Repentance, which persist still in their sins.

You have been passionate and revengeful, full of malice and bitterness: Do you still hate your Brother, or your Enemy? could you find in your heart to do him an injury? would you rejoyce at his calamity? would not you be willing to serve him? don't you study the opportunity to shew him how heartily you are reconciled with him? can't you abide
to

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to see him, or to speak with him? Why, then, truly you are not in a state of Repentance.

You have been an Extortioner, or an unjust Man; and you have used Tricks, and practis'd ill Arts to over-reach and cozen your Neighbours, to serve your own Ends.

And have you made them amends for it?

To be plain, Have you made full restitution? Have you nothing left but what is justly your own? Do you use no more these base and cursed Tricks? and are you well caution'd against them for the future? Had you rather die than wrong any one again? Instead of Injustice, do you now practise Charity? If this be not your Case, be not deceived, you are not a fit Man for the Kingdom of Heaven. You stand in
great

great need of Repentance.

Have you been an unclean Person, or a Drunkard? Don't say you are heartily sorry for all your sins, and you have striv'd with all your might against them. Is it otherwise now with you? Are you now chaste and temperate? Do you ever withstand the temptation? Can you deny the wicked Company that entices you to sin? Do you keep your self now pure and sober? Had you rather pluck out an Eye, or cut off an Hand than offend? If this be not your disposition, read your Doom, (except you actually repent and amend) 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. *Neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor drunkards, shall inherit the kingdom of God.*

And so for all other Crimes and Vices, as Lying and Swearing,
ing,

ing, &c. If you have contracted the Habit and Custom of Swearing, and taking God's Name in vain, then (and then only) you shall have repented, when you shall have overcome that evil Habit, and accustomed your self never to pronounce that sacred Name but with Adoration and Religion, for God's Glory and Service.

If you have been careless, and have neglected Religion, then you shall have reason to think you have repented, when you are become diligent, when you pray frequently and fervently; when you humble your self often in mourning for your sins, and in fastings, to subdue your sensual inclinations, to keep your body under, and bring it into subjection; and when you are grown zealous of Good Works,
and

and constant in all Religious Duties.

For *Repentance is a true and real change of Mind, and a conversion from sin to God.* I say, *Repentance is a true change of Mind, not some one bare Act of change, but a lasting durable state of new Life.* Otherwise 'tis not sincere: it is but a mock Repentance.

Some Men think, when at the Year's end, or Quarter's end, they go to the Lord's Table, cry out against their Sins, form a thousand Resolutions, and force themselves into a Religious Posture of Mind, after a long Habit of Sin and Carelesness: These Men, I say, fancy that they have well repented, that they are right Penitents, and that (after this) they may safely begin upon a new Score, with an intent to

B repent

repent again (as they call it) at the time appointed. So that, after a day or two, the pious fit is over, or to speak more properly, the hypocrisie ceaseth, and they are themselves again. *They return to their old sins, as the dog to his vomit again, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire,* 2 Pet. 2. 22.

But do you find a change in you? Are you not the same you were five, ten, or twenty Years ago, when you were led by Vanity, and you committed those things, whereof vertuous Men, and true Penitents are ashamed?

Are you now of another Mind? Do you find your self another Man? a new Creature? Have you now better Dispositions?

Have you not only ceased to do evil, but also learn'd to do good?

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good ? For then, and not else,
are you Penitents.

Having thus stated the true
Notion of Repentance, let us
next consider,

II. What we are to understand
by the Kingdom of Heaven, and
what the Nature of it is.

It was the Precursor of the
Messiah, exhorted Men to Re-
pentance upon the account of the
approach of the Kingdom of Hea-
ven : We may be sure therefore,
that by the Kingdom of Heaven,
then at hand, is meant the Mes-
siah's dispensation or œconomy.
It was an ordinary expression for
it among the *Jews*. They then
looked for, and were in expecta-
tion of the Kingdom of Heaven,
or the Heavenly Kingdom, mean-

ing the Coming of the Messiah in great Power and Glory : They were us'd to call it so, because they thought the Redeemer of *Israel*, the promis'd Saviour, was to be sent to them from Heaven ; and, for the most part, they little understood the Nature of his Kingdom, or the true End and Design of his Coming.

But certain it is, that 'tis a most heavenly Kingdom ; as is manifest to any one that is acquainted with it ; not only because that Kingdom is not of this World, but is seated in the Hearts and Spirits of Men ; but because it is a real Theocracy, God himself is the King, the Legislator and Governour ; and the Members, the Citizens or Subjects of it, are all heavenly Persons, or Men that lead heavenly Lives, agreeable to the most holy, most
wise,

wise, righteous, and everlasting Laws of God. That is Christianity.

'Tis therefore an heavenly Constitution, or Heaven upon Earth. God reigns in our Hearts, and over all our Passions, and his Will is the Rule of all our Actions.

And what is it the Lord requires of us, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God? As it is, Micah 6. 8.

Or, according to the Gospel-revelation, *To deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, Tit. 2. 12.* It is nothing but the state of Repentance continued and perfected, that is, a state of Holiness.

But some, perhaps, will say, this is Morality; And doth the

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Kingdom of Heaven consist in this ?

Why ; are not these express Texts of Scripture ? And doth not the very Preparative to Christianity, teach us, wherein the Nature and Essence of it doth consist ? If Men must repent, that is, *Cease to do evil, and learn to do well*, before they can be fit to become Christians ; Doth not that teach us that the Christian Religion doth consist in an entire conformity to the Divine Laws ? And doth not the Apostle declare as much in the definition or description he gives us of it ? *The kingdom of God*, says he, *is not meat and drink* (doth not consist of things in themselves indifferent) *but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* For, doth he add, *he that in these things serveth Christ, is*

acceptable to God, and approved of men, Rom. 14. 17, 18.

And Gal. 6. 15. *In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature.*

Nevertheless Men generally have strange odd Notions of the Christian Faith, and of Morality.

We are apt to fancy, that the improvement of our Knowledge and Speculations is the end of our Faith, the ultimate end of the Gospel-revelation. But St. James tells us, the Devils then may be as good Christians as we, for they *also believe and tremble*, Jam. 2. 19. And at the 26th Verse, *As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

Good Works then; are the very Life and Spirit of Christianity.

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nity. So that we are infinitely mistaken, if we think that any one Article of the Christian Faith ends meerly in Speculation, and has not a necessary influence upon Practice.

That Belief is good for nothing, and that Revelation is not worthy of the God of Heaven, which doth not tend to the reformation and perfection of Mens Lives and Manners. That's the only wise and reasonable End of all Religion: That's the only reasonable Service; and therein the true Glory of God doth consist.

Pure Religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this: To visit the fatherless, and widows in their afflictions, and to keep himself unspotted from the world,
Jam. i. 27.

We

We are indeed to be very zealous of Faith; so it be such a Faith as *worketh by Love*, Gal. 5. 6.

For without that it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him, Hebr. 11. 6.

But to him that hath such a Faith, nothing is impossible; as we find in that Chapter.

By Faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten Son; accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead.

By Faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the Son of Pharaoh's Daughter; chusing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to

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enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt : for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward.

The time would fail to tell of Gideon , and of Barak , and of Sampson , and of Jephtha , of David also and Samuel , and of the Prophets : who through faith subdued kingdoms , wrought righteousness , obtained promises , stopped the mouths of lions , quenched the violence of fire , escaped the edge of the sword , out of weakness were made strong , waxed valiant in fight , turned to flight the armies of the aliens . Women received their dead raised to life again : and others were tortured not accepting deliverance ; that they might obtain a better resurrection . And others had trial of cruel mockings

mockings and scourgings; they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, (of whom the world was not worthy).

All these obtained a good report through Faith. But you see it was a lively and operative Faith, that had such an influence upon all their Actions, as to make 'em comply in every thing with the good and holy Will of God.

Those then have not Faith, who do not lead good Lives, or at least not such an one as is spoken of in this Chapter; that is, an active and saving Faith; for that Faith is good for nothing, which doth not effect a thorough Reformation, and cause Men to live justly and vertuously. But

But now what is it we mean by Morality? If by it you understand a mere formal and outward conformity to the Laws of Holiness, without inward Purity; that is very far from the Kingdom of Heaven: As for Example, the Giving of Alms, Praying, Fasting, and the like, not from a Principle of Piety, or a Religious Fear and Love of God, but meerly to be seen and approved of Men, and had in good repute, or the like: But this is not true Morality; 'tis Hypocrisie.

Or if you mean the Morality of the Heathen Philosophers, that was imperfect and deficient, weak and obscure.

And so was in some measure the Moral Law of *Moses*; as is evident from many places of Scripture. Yet it was a great Advantage to the People of the
Jews,

Jews, and a peculiar Blessing; being a very considerable Help to Natural Religion, and an Introduction to Christianity.

But if you will know what true Morality is; that is, Christianity itself: 'Tis an exact and perfect conformity of our Lives and Actions, of our Thoughts, Words and Deeds, to the eternal Laws of right Reason, naturally (that is, by God himself) imprinted upon our Consciences, and as it were, reprinted (and that more deeply) by the Gospel of his Son.

And whoever vilifies Morality taken in this sense, vilifies and undervalues the Christian Religion, and rejects the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Sanction of the Second Covenant is fulfill'd the Divine Oracle of the 31st of *Jeremy*, at the
the

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the 93th Verse, where God did promise, That he would put his *Laws* in our inward parts, and write them in our hearts; that he would be our God, and we should be his people.

Since most Men were so dull as not to perceive it, and find it out themselves, they are told, That the kingdom of God is within them, Luk. 17. 21. That the true way to worship God, is to worship him with the Mind, and in sincerity of Heart, John 4. 23. That the Dictates of our Consciences are the very Laws of God, which we ought to reverence, and to observe religiously: that to contradict them is an abominable guilt; and that God hates Sin mortally; that is, whatsoever is against right Reason and Equity.

For

For the Gospel unfolds and proposes to us all the Precepts or Dictates of Conscience ; that is, the everlasting Laws of right Reason ; and denounceth the Wrath of God against every Soul that will not submit to 'em, and be ruled by 'em ; declaring that this is the Will of God, that God delighteth in no other Service but this ; but if we *do this, we shall live*, as it is written, *Luke 10. 28.*

And the holy Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, is come into the World, not only to tell us of this, but to give us a full assurance of it, and present unto us all the helps and motives necessary, thereby to recommend our Duty to us, and imprint the everlasting Laws of God *in our inward parts*, according to the Oracle in *Jeremy.*

He

He hath therefore undergone the bitter and ignominious Death of the Cross, and has offer'd the Sacrifice of himself, not only to make Satisfaction for our past Rebellions, in order to a reconciliation, and to make a publick reparation of the Divine Honour and Authority, which was affronted by all our Actions that were contrary to his Laws, and to right Reason; but also to give us thereby an invincible Proof, and a convincing Argument that God cannot love sin, that he cannot away with it, that he will never be Friends with sinners, till they actually forsake their sins, and learn righteousness: *Since* (as an excellent Man of our Church has it) *his Infinite Justice and Holiness would not permit him to propound Terms of Reconciliation with fallen Mankind, without*

without such a glorious and open manifestation of his just hatred and displeasure against sin and rebellion.

For no other consideration could prevail with God to be reconciled with us, and to remit our Offences upon condition of amendment and newness of Life, but the powerful interposition of his dear and only begotten Son, and his suffering in our Nature the punishment due to sin; when he took upon him to make satisfaction for it, in our behalf, to the injur'd Majesty of God, that the Justice and indispensable Obligation of God's Laws might be thereby acknowledged and demonstrated, and so a due reparation made to the Divine Honour and Authority.

Not but that, as the same Reverend Author goes on, God Almighty by the unlimited Goodness of

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of his own Nature, is infinitely inclin'd to all Acts of Favour and Pity; and he might without wrong to any one (if he had seen it fit) absolutely have pardon'd the Sins of Mankind, without any other Consideration than their repentance and amendment.

But he best knowing Mens Hearts, did not think it sufficient barely to send his Son among us, to declare his Will, and demand our Obedience; he was pleased also, (to print his Laws, the eternal Laws of Holiness, in our Minds, and to make a deeper impression upon our Spirits;) he was pleased, I say, to make an Example of his own begotten Son, when he took upon him to be the Advocate and the Pledge of Sinners, thereby to convince us, that since he spared not his own Son, but deliver'd him up
unto

unto Death, upon the account of sin, he will surely shew no mercy to us, if we are not wrought upon to forsake all our evil ways, and turn unto the Lord our God, and suffer him to Reign over us.

For that was the very thing Christ came into the World for, *viz.* to restore rebellious Men to the Favour and Love of God, in bringing them again to their Duty and Allegiance.

He tells us himself, *Mat. 9. 13.* *He came to call sinners to repentance.* And the Apostle St. Paul teacheth us, that this was the end of his Death, *Tit. 2. 14.* *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.*

And indeed he fully demonstrated, by his Death and Sufferings, the absolute necessity of returning to our Duty ; assuring
us

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us thereby, That *the wages of sin is death* ; that God will by no means spare those that persist in their Rebellion , and reject the Offers of Grace made to them in the Gospel, and that there is no way to *escape, if we neglect so great a salvation.*

As he forewarns us in the Parable, the Lord will surely order; at the Great Day of Accounts, *All his Enemies, which would not that he should reign over them, to be brought and slain before him,* Luke 19. 27.

But this is not all that was done by our blessed Saviour to establish the Kingdom of Heaven among Men. He not only did reveal the pure Laws of Heaven, and manifested to the World the Wrath and Judgment of God against them that will not be ruled by 'em ; he hath also *brought*
life

life and immortality to light thro the Gospel : He hath not only revealed, but also given full assurance, by his own Death and Resurrection, that God will reward with everlasting Life and Felicity, and an immortal Crown of Glory in Heaven, those that will submit to his Government, live according to the Gospel of his Son, and be his faithful Subjects in this World.

Thus did the Mediator of the Second Covenant put the Laws of God in our inward parts, and write them in our hearts.

I have thus long insisted upon this Point, on purpose to make Christianity, or the Messiah's Dispensation the better known. For these are wholly and absolutely ignorant of the Nature of this his Heavenly Kingdom, who conceit that Christ hath reconciled

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ciled God to sin, or to sinners that continue in their sins ; as I hope doth appear from what hath been said, particularly concerning the Nature of the Christian Faith ; and as must needs indeed be evident to any one who will but consider seriously the Precepts, the Promises, and the Threatnings of the Gospel.

We are told, *Acts 3. 26.* That the end for which God sent his Son, was to bless us, in turning away every one of us from our iniquities.

It must needs therefore be a great Blessing to be freed from our sins, and brought again under the Dominion of the Kingdom of Heaven.

What pretence then, or what excuse can we now frame, if we still despise and reject God's Laws, and will not submit to his Divine Government? How

How can we refuse to *yield our selves unto God*, and become God's obedient People; seeing he requires nothing of us but what is agreeable to the best Reason in the World, and the Light of our own Consciences, and what tends to our truest Happiness, even in this Life, (such as must necessarily arise from Contentment, Peace of Conscience, and Serenity of Mind, and all the Christian Vertues) and will secure our everlasting Happiness in the World to come?

For *the kingdom of God is not meat and drink*, (it doth not consist in indifferent things) *but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the holy Ghost*; as we saw before, *Rom. 14. 17.*

When we are admitted to the freedom of the Kingdom of Heaven, we take a solemn Oath of Alle-

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Allegiance, which comprehends these three things :

I. That we renounce the Devil and all his Works, the Poms and Vanity of this wicked World, and all the sinful Lusts of the Flesh.

II. That we receive and embrace all the Articles of the Christian Faith.

And III. That we will keep God's Holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the same all the Days of our Life.

And as long as we are true to this Oath, we remain good and faithful Subjects, we are God's People, and he is our God.

This is the Kingdom of Heaven ; that is, the Christian Religion.

Now,

Now 3^{ly}, it is not hard to discern what reason there was to repent, the Kingdom of Heaven being at hand ; and what reason then there is for Repentance, now the Kingdom of Heaven is come.

The Kingdom of God being such as we have now seen, it is evident that Repentance is a necessary step or preparative to it.

How will Men submit and conform themselves to the Divine Laws, if they do not forsake their Sins, and learn to practice the contrary Vertues ? They cannot serve God and Mammon, Luk. 16. 13. *For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ; what communion hath light with darkness ; and what concord hath Christ with Belial ?* as says the Apostle, 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15.

'Tis certain Men will never be thorowly converted, if they do

not first repent, and begin by Reformation.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, Prov. 9. 10. So Repentance is the beginning of Christianity.

Those that forsake their Sins, and repent heartily of them, are fit Men to make Christians of ; but no wonder that the Rulers, the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the rest of the Hypocrites and Reprobates of that Age believed not in Jesus Christ. *The secret of the Lord is only with them that fear him ; the secret of the Lord is with the righteous, and to such he will shew his covenant, as we read, Psal. 25. 14. Prov, 3. 32.*

In a word, the good Seed taketh no effect, but when it falls in a good and well prepared Ground, that is, in an honest and good Heart ; as is apparent from the Parable, *Luk. 8. 15.* Is

Is it now necessary to bring any further Proofs to shew how much reason then there is for us Christians to repent ?

Hear what Christ himself, the Author of our Faith, has expressly declared, *Luk. 13. 3. Except ye repent, ye shall all perish.* And if we are called with an *holy and heavenly calling.* (As it is *2 Tim. 1. 9. Heb. 3. 1. 1 Thess. 4. 7.* and in other places of Scripture) it must needs be surely to this end, that we should *stablish our hearts unblameable in holiness.* *1 Thess. 3. 13. And perfect holiness in the fear of God, having cleansed our selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, 2 Cor. 7. 1*

He that never began to study, nor ever was acquainted with Books, may with as much reason conceit himself a great Scholar, as he that hath not forsaken his

Sins, and repented, think he may be a Christian.

Let us therefore repent, that we may *follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord*, Heb. 12. 14.

We cannot barely say, as the Baptist, *Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*; but the Hour now is, that we must bid all Men repent, because the Kingdom of God is come, and that is inconsistent with a state of Sin and Wickedness.

The Times of our Ignorance God winked at; but now he expects we shall all repent: And the reason of it we find, *Acts 17. 31. Because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom he has ordained; where-as he has given assurance to all men, in that he has raised him from the dead.* Finally

Finally, in *Luk. 12. 48.* we read that *unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required. What manner of persons than ought we to be,* (we to whom Christ is preached, and the Kingdom of God fully revealed) *what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?* as *St. Peter* has it in his 2 Epist. 3. 11.

Hence we may take occasion, in the 4th place, to consider, what sort of Persons are the Subjects of the Heavenly Kingdom; that we may assuredly know whether we are such or not; that if we are, we may praise God for it, and continue to be so; or if we are not, we may see what is to be done to become such.

It is evident that a thorough Conversion from Sin to Holiness, is the Business of Christianity.

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The Design of Christ's coming into the World, was to make Men truly holy. The only Preparation necessary for the Entertainment of the Messiah, or the Reception of his Heavenly Doctrine, consisted in having this work begun in them, by Repentance. *Repent ye, said the Baptist, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

A Christian therefore (a true Christian I mean, and not one in name only) is one that has forsaken all his evil ways, and is turned with all his heart unto the Lord his God, to do his whole Will and, keep his Commandments, as long as he lives.

They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts, Gal. 5. 24.

It is one who has *denied himself, and taken up his cross, Matt.*

16. 24. One that treads upon the steps of his Saviour, and runs with patience the race that is set before him, looking unto Christ Jesus, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set at the right hand of God. Hebr.

12. 1, 2. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, says the Apostle St. Paul, 2 Cor. 5. 17. And Rom. 6. 3. &c. They that are baptised in Jesus Christ are baptised into his death; therefore they are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, even so they also should walk in newness of life.

Leaving, therefore, the principles of the doctrine of Christ, they go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith to-

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wards God, as the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* has it, 6. 1.

In a word, true Christians are *a peculiar people, purified from all iniquity, and zealous of all good works*, Tit. 2. 14.

But if you will know more particularly what manner of men true Christians are in their Life and Conversation, you must read all the Precepts of the Gospel.

For we can never take them for true Christians, that do not love Jesus Christ, and are none of his Friends. And I am sure all those are mere Hypocrites, who pretend to love him, and yet keep not his Commandments.

He has said it expressly, *If ye love me keep my commandments*, John 14. 15. And at the 21 ver. of the same Chapter, *He that has my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me*,
or

or as it is at the 23 ver. *If a man love me, he will keep my words.*

By this we shall know certainly whether we are his Disciples, or not. *Love is the fulfilling of the law*, as we read, *Rom. 13. 10.* that is, it is the sum of it : Charity comprehends all the Precepts of Christianity, and implies all the Duties of Religion. Therefore our Saviour has made it the *Criterion*, or the Sign and Mark to know true Christians by, *John 13. 35.*

In the 15th Chapter of the same Gospel, at the 12th ver He calls it his Commandment, *This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I loved you.* And at the 14th ver. *Ye are my friends,* saith he, *if ye do whatsoever I command you.*

Than we are not his Friends,

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if we do not whatsoever he commands us, then surely we are not Christians. But there's no difficulty in the case, we are true Christians, we are his Friends, if we do whatsoever he commands us.

Some Men perhaps, at the first blush, will be apt to think that this Representation of a Christian is defective ; because though I shew him to be one that renounceth Sin and the Devil, and makes it his Business to frame his Life according to the Commandments of God ; yet I do not mention the particulars of his Belief. But they may consider that this were needless to our present purpose, and superfluous ; it being supposed that he who yields himself intirely, and without any reserve, to our Lord Jesus Christ, to do his whole will, doth
most

most sincerely believe his holy Gospel, and receives and adheres to all the Truths revealed in it.

It were unreasonable in this occasion to think that a too general Catalogue of the Articles of his Faith, since 'tis most certain God requires no more, and no more is necessary to the Design of the Gospel, and the Business of Religion, that is to make Men truly holy.

Men may be ignorant of the meaning of several obscure places of Scripture, nay, and be mistaken in their Understanding of several places (for no body is infallible) and yet be right good Christians, if they do but answer the Design of Christianity, which cannot be mistaken but wilfully.

So that if a Man The Design of Christianity.
can say, *I am sincerely*
ly willing to obey my Creator and
Redeemer

Redeemer in all things commanded by them; I do entertain and harbour no Lust in my Breast, I do heartily endeavour to have a right understanding of the holy Scriptures, and chiefly of the Gospel, and to know what Doctrines are delivered there in order to the bettering of my Soul by them, and the direction of my Life and Actions according to them.

If a Man can but say this truly of himself, he may be sure whatsoever Mistakes he may labour under, they cannot be such as will undo his Soul, since they do not hinder him to answer the Design of the Gospel, and the end of our Saviour's coming into the World, that is to return sincerely and heartily to the Obedience of God, to submit to his divine Government, and frame his Life according to the Laws
and

and Constitutions of his most Heavenly Kingdom.

It is certain Faith is required to no other end but this ; whoever reads the Scriptures cannot but see that this is the thing aim'd at by all God's Dispensations. Let us always remember then to make it the end of our Faith.

Our Saviour tells us, *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in a field, the which when a man has found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he has, and buyeth that field*, Matth. 13. 44. That is, they that will purchase the Kingdom of Heaven, must part with all their darling Sins, and all their beloved Lusts: Christianity is not to be attain'd unto any otherwise.

O then, how many dream of
Divine

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Divine Treasures and Kingdoms, fancy they have found the Pearl of great Price, and as we say, Build Castles in the Air, and are still errant Beggars, as to the concerns of the everlasting Riches, and in the sight of God ?

How many are there in the World call themselves Christians, and have nothing at all of it but just the Name ? They have nothing to shew for their Title to the Kingdom of Heaven, but their own false and impudent Claim, without any Grounds.

But we may as well call ourselves *Jews* and *Mahometans*, when we do not observe the Laws of *Moses*, or of the *Alcoran*, as call our selves Christians, when we do not live according to the Precepts of the Gospel ; would you therefore know whether you are Christians ? Compare

pare your Lives with the Laws of Christianity.

Our Saviour hath commanded us to *let our light shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorifie our father which is in heaven*, Matt. 5. 16.

And in the following Verses he adds, (a warning very necessary to this present Generation) *Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the propbets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.*

For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case, enter into the kingdom of heaven.

*Ie have heard, that it was said
by*

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by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Racha, shall be in danger of the Council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery, but I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, has committed adultery with her already in his heart. If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off. It is better for thee that one of thy members should perish, than that thy whole body should be cast into Hell.

Swear not at all. Love your enemies.

mies. Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

All these we find in the 5th Chapter of *St. Matt.* and in the 11th of the same Gospel, at the 29th Verse, *Take my yoke upon you, says our blessed Saviour, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.*

We are infinitely unreasonable, if we fancy that to be a Christian, it is sufficient to own Christ by an outward Profession, without actual Obedience to all his Commands. He declares expressly, *Matt. 7. 21.* That 'tis not every one that says unto him, *Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of God.*

Yet after all this, we have but too much reason still to complain and cry out with the Psalmist,
Psal.

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Pfal. 82. 5. They will not be learned nor understand ; but walk on still in darkness : all the foundations of the earth are out of course.

Still Men will needs fancy themselves Christians, that is, members of the kingdom of Heaven, when they are evidently the Subjects of the Kingdom of Darkness.

How many are there that commit Sin, and yet pretend that they are born of God ? against the positive Declaration of the Apostle St. John, 1 Joh. 3. 9.

But some will say, *If none were true Christians but those who keep the Commandments of God, and do not commit sin ; who then can be a Christian ?*

I answer in the words of our blessed Saviour, *Matt. 7. 14. Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life,*
and

and few there be that find it.

Few, God knows, few they are, especially in these our days, that are true Christians indeed, tho' there be many that call themselves by that holy Name.

But the mischief is, the greatest part of them who *name the Name of Christ*, depart not from *iniquity*, and therefore the greatest part of them that call themselves Christians, shall find by a sad Experience, at the great and terrible Day of the Lord, that they have no share in Christ Jesus.

For either we must not believe the Scriptures, or we must be sure that all Drunkards, Swearers, unjust or uncharitable Persons, &c. are far from being Christians; and yet how many such do we find among the Professors of Christianity? What more

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more frequent now a days than Wrath, Malice and Revenge, Fraud, Injustice, Drunkenness, Swearing, and all sort of Sin.

And still if you believe it, we are all Protestants ; that is the purer sort of Christians.

But how few, notwithstanding all this pretended Purity, how few are there among us that are truly humble, meek and lowly in heart, charitable, patient and of long suffering ? How few are there that do not to others, what they would not others should do unto them ? How few do we see that will bear an affront or an injury without resentment and revenge ? How few can find in their Hearts to forgive their Enemies ? How few then love their Neighbours, that is, all other Men as themselves.

And yet we may be sure that
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without all this, our Pretentions to Christianity are groundless, vain and insignificant.

But is it then impossible to be a Christian? No such matter, we read of many in the holy Scriptures, that they were just in their Generations, and perfect in the sight of the Lord, as of *Noah*, Gen. 6. 9. *Job*, Job 1. 1. *David*, 1 Kings 11. 34. & 14. 8. *Asa*, 1 Kings 15. 11. *Josias*, 2 Kings 22. 2. and *Zacharias* and *Elizabeth*, Luk. 1. 6.

Which shews that God doth not expect of us a perfect state of Impeccability, but a perfect Sincerity, I say, a perfect Sincerity. We must *love the Lord our God, with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind*, Matt. 22. 37. And therefore we must obey his Commandments, and do his will, with all the power

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er of our Soul, and all the sincerity of our Mind, and sure that is not impossible.

But never flatter your selves that you have done all you can, and that you are sincere, as long as you continue in a wicked course of Life. Alas! you are then worse then Heathens.

Don't you believe that God affords us the Aid and Assistance of his Holy Spirit? Our Saviour affirms it, *Luke 11. 13.* He gives it to them that ask it, *viz.* in devout and constant Prayers. And sure his *Grace is sufficient for us*, as God Almighty says it himself, *2 Cor. 12. 9.*

Whosoever therefore is buried with Christ in the Baptism of Repentance, *Sin shall have no dominion over him*, he is freed from it, as we read, *Rom. 6.* at the 7th and 14th Verses. And whosoever

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ver is born of God, overcometh the world, 1 John 5. 4.

Those that walk in the spirit, do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, Gal. 5. 16. But, like St. Paul, they keep under their bodies, and bring them into subjection, lest they should be cast away, 1 Cor. 9. 27.

They baffle Hell and the Devil, they resist him till he be gon from them. *Resist the devil, says St. James, and he will flee from you, Jam. 4. 7.*

In a word, *The weapons of their warfar are mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth it self against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of God, as it is, 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.*

So that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers

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powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other Creature is able to separate them from the love of God. Rom. 8. 38, 39.

And if this be true, if nothing hinders but they may, then surely they are obliged ever to continue in his Love, that is, as I have proved from the 21st Verse of the 14th Chapter of the Gospel according to St. *John*, in the constant Practice and Observance of his will.

For they (and they only) that *endure unto the end shall be saved*, as it is, *Matt. 24. 13.* But *no man*, we are told, *Luke 9. 62.* *having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*

Our blessed Saviour in *Matt. 7. 24. 25.* compares him that learns his will and doth it, to a
wise

wise man, who builds his house upon a rock, which stands firm, and will never fall, tho' the rain descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow and beat upon that house.

From all has been said, we may draw the following Inferences.

I. No Doctrine can be more Antichristian, than such as encourage Vice and a loose way of living.

For nothing can be more contrary to the Nature and Constitution of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatsoever doth so is directly opposite to the very design of Christianity, tends to the Subversion of it, and conspires the Ruine and Overthrow of the Kingdom of God among Men.

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Nothing then can be vainer or more ridiculous, than to take that for a true Christian Doctrine which allows Men in, or encourageth them to Sin. *Whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God,* 1 John 3. 10.

So that, though our Righteousness doth not reach unto God, so as to add to his Happiness, yet are we obliged to be righteous. Though when we have done all, we must say, *We are unprofitable servants* ; yet we must do all.

Though we must not be proud, and indeed we have no reason to boast for all our good works ; yet we are obliged to do all good works.

Though we can do nothing without the Grace of God ; yet we must believe he affords us sufficient Strength, and we are
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to act upon that Supposition, and do our Duty diligently; otherwise our Neglect and Folly is inexcusable.

Though our Saviour died and made a full and sufficient Satisfaction for us; yet it was in order to our Reconciliation to God and Holiness; He has not purchased for us a Licence to sin; but except we repent, purifie our selves from all Iniquity, and grow zealous of all good works, we shall still perish, we shall receive no Benefit by his Sacrifice.

For though the *Ceremonial* or *Judaical* Law be abolished, yet the Natural Law, the everlasting Law of Holiness, of Reason and Equity, or Conscience stands firm, and can never be repealed. Could you imagine that that Law was made void through

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Faith? *God forbid*, says the Apostle, *yea*, doth he add, *we establish the Law*, Rom. 3. 31.

And though we are justified freely, and saved by Grace, yet it is *through Faith*, and that not a dead Faith, such as the Devils may have; but such an one as *worketh by Love*, as we have seen, Gal. 5. 6.

Let us not then object any thing against our Duty, but set about it instantly; knowing that we are to expect no Grace, no Favour, no Mercy at God's Hands upon the Account of our Faith, if it doth not purifie us from all iniquity; and that it will avail us nothing at all to have believed in Jesus Christ, if we do not believe in him, so as to forsake all our Sins, and become pure, and holy, and fruitful in all good Works, and
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frame our Lives perfectly according to his Will and the Precepts of his Gospel, submitting our selves wholly to his Government and his most heavenly Kingdom, and letting him rule us, and reign over us.

Otherwise our Faith is a dead Faith, no better than that of Devils, who *believe and tremble*, Jam. 2. 19.

We are therefore inexcusable, if we are so impertinent, after this, as to wrest (either through our Ignorance or Instability) any Saying in the Bible, to favour our Lusts, and so flatter us in our own Destruction.

Some Men are very fond of these and the like places, *Be not righteous overmuch. And, What I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that I do. It is no more I then that do it, but sin that dwel-*

leth in me: As if by these, or the like, they were discharged from the Duty and Necessity of Holiness.

But either these Words are capable of a good sence, reconcilable with our strictest Duty, or else they are (not the Dictates of the Spirit of God, nor the Sence of the Holy inspired Men themselves, but (the Proverbs or Sayings of dissolute Men, who are there personated, which lie under the Dominion of sin, and are *brought into captivity to the law of sin*.

We are little verſt indeed in Scripture, if we know not there are some things obscure in it. Yet we must be blind, if we do not plainly perceive that it doth indispensably exact of us a righteous and just, and a vertuous and holy Life, agreeable to the heavenly

venly and everlasting Laws of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Our God has no pleasure in wickedness, neither shall any evil dwell with him. Such as be foolish shall not stand in his sight ; for he hateth all them that work vanity. He shall destroy them that speak leasing : The Lord will abhor both the blood-thirsty and deceitful man, as the Psalmist has it, *Psal. 5. 4, 5, 6.*

And God is not of another Mind under the Gospel ; but if the Christian Faith did indeed make void the Necessity of being truly righteous and holy, and allowed its Professors the Liberty of living in Immorality and Sin ; it ought to be rejected of all sober Men, with Abomination and Horror, as a damnable Contrivance of Hell and the Devil : Nay if it were not more

apt to reform Mens Lives and Manners, and make them much better and holier, than any other Religion that was established in the World before : I don't see what Reason we could have to think that God is the Author of it, or that God will have us prefer it to his former Revelations.

But I am sure if it was true that the Christian Religion did not exact a perfect Conformity to the Laws of Nature, but encourageth Men to, or indulgeth them in the Practice of Immorality and Wickedness; we could never perswade the wise Heathens, and much less the Jews ; and we our selves should have no Reason at all to believe that it proceeds from God. For the only convincing Reason that we have, to prove that our Saviour's
and

and the Apostles Miracles (which both *Jews* and *Heathens* attributed to the Power of Magick, or at best to God's Permission to try the Children of Men) were affected by the immediate Power of God, in confirmation of the Truth of the Gospel; is because the Doctrine of the Gospel, or the Christian Religion is infinitely averse to the Genius of the Devil, and most agreeable to the Spirit of God, the Dictates of right Reason, and our own Consciences, that is the divine and everlasting Laws of the Kingdom of Heaven.

If the Design of the Christian Religion had been to alienate Mens Minds from God and Goodness, we could not but conclude it to be the Works of the Devil

But if it tends to the Glory of God, and the Good of Mankind, if it be apt to promote true Piety and Vertue, and if its Design be to inspire Mens Minds with great and worthy Thoughts of God, and suitable Affections towards him, and to reduce the World to the Practice of Charity, Justice, and Humility, Chastity, Temperance and Sobriety, Patience, Meekness and Gentleness, and all other divine Vertues; then it is impossible (or at least absolutely unreasonable) to attribute the wonderful Deeds that were wrought in confirmation of the Truth of its Promises and Threatnings, to a wicked, malicious, proud, unjust, revengeful and impious Spirit.

It being then evident that all those Doctrines which reconcile Vice with Religion, are false and
Dia-

Diabolical; we may therefore be sure if we explain any obscure Saying of Scripture, so as to make it encourage or palliate Wickedness, and excuse Men from being holy and doing Righteousness; we put a false Sense upon it.

Our *Traditions* are false and abominable, if by them we make the *Commandments of God* of none effect. That's the *First Inference*.

Secondly, Those Men are infinitely mistaken, who fancy the Essence of Religion to consist in Speculation and not in Practice; and cry out against Morality, as if true Morality was not true Religion.

Holiness is the end of Faith, and the end of Divine Revelation, it is the Law and the Prophets,

phets, and the very Gospel. For God's Design in the Gospel is no other than that of the Law, or any former Revelation: As we read of the Householder of the Parable, *Matth. 21. 33. &c.* That he sent several of his Servants at several times, and last of all his own Son, to those Husbandmen to whom he had let out his Vineyard; and that all the Messengers he sent, were to no other end but this, *viz* To demand the Fruits of his Vineyard: So God at sundry times has sent divers Messengers to the Sons of Men; Angels and Prophets, and at last his only begotten Son: And to what end was all this but to excite Men to pay him those Fruits he expects from them; to take them off from their Sins, and perswade them to their Duty and Allegiance, to make them good.

good and obedient, that they may become his good Subjects, and may be Partakers of his Holiness and divine Nature, and so of his everlasting Kingdom?

We must then beware of those who make the end of Religion and the Essence of it to consist in Speculation, and not in a holy Practice.

Those Men know not the Power of the Gospel, they are not acquainted with the Nature of the Kingdom of Heaven, they are ignorant of what they pray for, in their daily Prayers, when they say unto God, *Thy kingdom come.*

Thirdly, It follows, that our chief and main Business is to study our Duty, to learn it and to practice it, that we may work out our own salvation with fear and

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and trembling, as it is, Phil. 2. 12.

Those are in a great Error who imagine we must always rest in the Doctrines of Repentance and Faith, against the express Commandment of the Apostle, *Hebr. 6. 1.* For as St. James says, *What doth it profit, though a man say he has faith, and have not works? can faith save him? Faith without works is dead, and therefore unprofitable, Jam. 2. at the 14 and 26 Verses.*

They are then ignorant and senseless Christians, or rather no Christians at all, who do not much regard God's Commandments, or do not much care to learn his Will, and what it is he requires of every one of us; who undervalue and despise those Books and Discourses that instruct them in all the parts of their Duty, and teach them that with-

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out the sincere Performance of it, it is in vain to hope for Heaven ; and rather delight in curious and speculative Notions, fondly perswading themselves, that the Knowledge and Belief of such, will bring them to everlasting Happiness, and fully discharge them from the Practice of the *whole Duty of Man*, as if there was a way to be *righteous* without doing *Righteousness*.

But if we are seriously desirous of the things that belong to our Peace, that our Faith may be approved, and may be such as will be accepted of God ; and if we will not deceive our selves with a vain and dead Faith : If we design in good earnest to have a Share in Christ Jesus, to enjoy the Benefit of that glorious Redemption he hath wrought in the behalf of fall'n Mankind,
and

and to be included in that Act of Grace and Indemnity he hath obtained for all Rebels that will return to their true Allegiance, that is, all penitent Sinners: Then it concerns us to return sincerely and impartially under the Dominion of the Kingdom of Heaven, and become God's faithful Subjects, which cannot be, if we do not conform to his divine Laws.

Our Business therefore must be to study diligently and learn his whole Will, and to practice it with all the Zeal and Sincerity of our Souls.

Our Business (if we will be Christians indeed, and not barely in Name) is to know perfectly what is our Duty to God; what is our Duty to ourselves; and what is our Duty to all other Men.

We

We must know exactly what is the Duty of Children to Parents ; of Parents to Children ; of Servants to Masters ; of Masters to Servants ; of Husband and Wife, of Friends and Enemies one to another ; of the Poor to the Rich, and the Rich to the Poor, and the like.

But it doth not only concern us to know these things ; our main Business is to practice them, otherwise we are as far from Christianity as before.

For, *Though we have all knowledge, if we have not Charity, we are nothing,* 1 Cor. 13. 2. And as our blessed Saviour tells us, *Luke 12. 47. That servant which knew his Lords will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.*

Fourthly,

Fourthly, If, Without holiness no man shall see the Lord, and if it be impossible, and a very contradiction, to be a Member of the Kingdom of Heaven, without doing the will of God, and living in Obedience to his Commands; then it follows necessarily that if we have any concern for our Souls, or any value for our Salvation, we must neglect nothing in order to it, but must prosecute the means of Grace with all diligence.

Some Men neglect the hearing and reading of God's Word, their private and daily Devotions, the Publick Service of God, or if they meet in his House, they little mind what is done there; they neglect the Opportunities of coming to the Lords Table, to commemorate with pure and thankful hearts the inestimable
Death

Death of Christ, and there renew solemnly their holy Vows and Resolutions; they are perfect Strangers to the Doctrine of Fasting, and they let their Bodies grow too head-strong for them: Then if you talk to them of governing their Appetites of Self-denial and Resignation, forgiving Injuries, and the like; they complain of their Infirmities, and cry, *Who is sufficient for these things?*

But whose Fault is it if they are not? Judge I pray you betwixt me and my vineyard, says the Lord of Hosts, what could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore then when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes, Isa.

5. 3, 4.

Lastly,

Lastly, We must be sure to remember, it is a great piece of Madness for Men to pretend to the Name of Christians, whilst they put off their Repentance, and live in the Practice of any Sin; and it is no less unreasonable for them after a wicked Course of Life, and a continual Neglect and Contempt of the Grace of God during their Life time, to conceit they depart right good Christians out of this World, by vertue of a late and Death-bed Repentance.

Alas! Repentance at best, is but the way, or a Step to Christianity, and even that is a Business that requires a great deal of Pains and Time, many repeated Resolutions and Endeavours.

I shall not need to add more to shew the Unreasonableness and Invalidity of a Death-bed Repentance; but this I will freely say, I believe there's nothing in the World causeth the Destruction of more Souls, or doth more effectually the Work of the Devil, than that Doctrine which makes Christianity so easie, so slight and trifling a Business.

I will not indeed dishearten Men at no time from doing their Duty, and turning unto the Lord with all their Heart and with all their Soul; but neither will I encourage any to be presumptuous at their last Hour upon the Account of a late and Death bed Repentance.

I will advise such sinful Wretches, (who while they enjoyed their Life and Health, and thought themselves out of God's reach)

reach) rejected the Offers of Grace, and spent their time in Sin and Vanity, or liv'd in the Practice of any Sin, and now are loath to be damned, for their Folly, and would fain make their Peace, when they see themselves launching into Eternity : I say, I will advise them not to throw away the poor Remnant of their Time in unprofitable Profession of their great Grief and Sorrow ; (who doubts it, when Hell is open before them, and they are upon the Brink of the precipice ?) in passionate Profession of great Kindness for God and Vertue, (when they have laugh'd at both, as long as they could enjoy their Humour) or in fulsome Flatteries and Complements ; and least of all in confident Extasies, bold Claims of
Salva-

Salvation, and Triumphs in the Mercy of God.

But I would have them humble themselves to the Dust before him, like fugitive Slaves, who are apprehended, much against their Will, and are brought by Force and Violence, to appear before their Lord's Tribunal: I would have them dispose themselves with just Fears and profound Humility to submit to God's Judgment, whatever it shall be: And I would perswade them to set all in order by the way, as much as ever they can; to undo as much as they are able all the Evil they have done, and do all the Good that may be done in so little time; that is, make all the Restitution, and all the Reparation possible, (if they have wrong'd or injur'd any) frame their Minds, as much as they can,

can, by sober and serious thoughts and strong and well grounded Resolutions, to quite different Dispositions than those they had before, and endure all the Pains and Misery of their Sickness with Patience and Submission, proceeding from a due sense of their Deserts and an acknowledgment of the divine Justice; and when they have effected all this, I will advise them to cry to God for *Mercy* in the deepest Humility of their Souls, acknowledging that they have not performed what God requires in the Gospel; that therefore they have no Reason to presume upon his Mercy; and that if he consumes them in an everlasting Fire, it is but that they have deserved, and what was foretold them by his Ministers.

Yet

Yet I will urge them still to cry to God, *Mercy, Mercy*, and put themselves, as much as they are able, in a fit Disposition to obtain Mercy. For who knows whether God will not be intreated, and who can tell whether the Almighty has no hid Treasures of Mercy in store?

However, it must beacknowledged, this is the safest and reasonablest Course they can take, having no other Hopes left but this. And these are very far from affording any grounds of Confidence and Presumption.

O then, since we know these things, ought we not to *remember now our Creator*, according to the Exhortation, *Eccl. 12. 1. now, while it is called to day*, Heb. 3. 13.

E

Ought

Ought we not, with the *Psal-
mist*, to *make haste, and delay
not to keep God's Commandments*,
Psal. 119. 60.

Certainly if we do not take
warning, after all this, if we re-
fuse to hearken to the heavenly
calling, and are not wrought up-
on to forsake all our *Rebellions*,
and return to the *Obedience of
God with all our Heart, and with
all our Soul* ; not only these
things will rise in Judgment a-
gainst us, and condemn us, but
our *Condemnation* will be most
fearful and terrible ; for even
those *impious and wicked Men
of Sodom*, who have been guilty
of the most shameful and unna-
tural Lusts, and did provoke God
by their *abominable Sins* to rain
Fire and Brimstone from Heaven
upon them, and consume them
in an *Eternal Fire* : Even these
Men,

Men at the last Day, shall be treated far more tollerably, than those who reject the Offers of Grace, when the Kingdom of Heaven is preach'd unto them, as our Saviour assures us, *Luke 10. 12.*

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ also loved us, and has given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour. But fornication and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient; but rather giving of thanks.

For this you know, (or, may be sure of) that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, which is an idolater, hath a-

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ny inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words ; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience, Ephes. 5. 1. &c.

Let us not therefore flatter our selves with a conceit of God's singular Favour, whilst we are the very *Children of Disobedience*, we must either renounce our Christianity, and our Hopes of Heaven, or renounce our Sins.

It is the most ridiculous thing in the Word to pretend to either of the former, whilst we continue in the Practice of any evil thing.

The Lord alloweth the righteous ; but the ungodly and him that delighteth in wickedness doth his soul abhor, Psal. 11. 6.

Since

Since therefore ther's no other way to obtain God's Favour, but in being righteous and forsaking all manner of Wickedness ; since the very Principles of our Religion oblige us to cease from all that is evil, and learn all that is good ; let us be sure to avoid Sin as Men would the Plague, and let us daily *grow in grace*, according to *St. Peter's Exhortation*, 2 *Pet.* 3. 18.

Let us be sure, whatever Interests we have to serve, whatever Dealings we may be engaged in, to be always strictly just and upright. Let us never use any ill Tricks to serve our own ends, but in all our Transactions with one another ; let us deal with that Simplicity and Integrity and good Conscience, that becomes those who would be ac-

counted the Disciples of the holy Jesus.

Sin is the Transgression of a known Law. Now what a horrid thing is it, what Impudence, for mortal Men to do that they know is forbidden by the Almighty Governour of the World, the righteous and impartial Judge of the Quick and the Dead!

But (I cannot forbear saying it once more) What piece of Madness is it for Men to do this, and yet pretend to be God's Servants, and the Disciples of the Son of his Love, whom he has sent into the World a purpose to reform the World, and shew the stray'd Race of Mankind, the way to true Happiness and Bliss, in teaching them to *turn from their iniquities*, as it is, *Acts 3.26.*

We do infinitely mistake the Design of his Coming, and the Nature of his Religion, if we do not believe that it is to make Men much better and holier than they were before, and indeed to make them as good and as holy as it is possible for Men to be.

Let us then study earnestly his whole Will, and practice it accordingly, least those who have never heard of him, should be accounted better than we.

If we will be truly Christians, let it be the earnest Endeavour of our Lives to render our selves as excellent and as exemplary for all sort of amiable Qualities, as it is possible for Men to be in this World.

Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: If there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things, Phil. 4. 8.

See what your Obligations are! We that have such a glorious light vouchsafed unto us, and such unvaluable Promises, and such mighty Assistances made over to us by the Gospel of Christ; must in reason imagine that in return of these great Advantages, great things are expected from us.

It will not satisfy our Engagements that we do believe and profess the Gospel, that we do
no

no Wrong to our Neighbours, that we are neither given to Lewdness, nor Drunkenness; (though yet even these, as the World goes, are very great things, and could all Men that profess Christianity truly say this of themselves, we should soon see Heaven upon Earth,) but our Christianity obliges us to aspire after greater things, we must get our selves possessed of the whole Circle of Vertues; we must be kind and charitable, as well as just and honest; we must be modest, and meek and humble, as well as temperate and chaste.

Then (may I add to these, excellent Words of an Excellent and most Reverend Prelate of our Church) Then will Christ indeed own us for his Disciples;

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*for then we shall be true Subjects
to God's Kingdom upon Earth :
and if we continue to be so unto
the end, we shall not fail at
last to be admitted into his most
glorious Kingdom in Heaven,
where we shall enjoy the infinite
Pleasure of Holiness to everlast-
ing Ages.*

A

Morning and Evening
P R A Y E R.

A Lmighty God, the Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Creator of Men and An-
gels, and the supream Govern-
our of the World, in whom, and
by whom we move, we live,
and have our Beings ; who
shewest thy self to be perfect-
ly Good and Bountiful, infinite-
ly wise and glorious, and per-
fectly just and holy.

We

We thy poor Creatures, prostrate our selves in the deepest Humility of our Souls before thy Divine Majesty, to render unto thee the due Tribute of our Homage and Worship, and offer the *Morning*,

* Evening,
if it be at
Night.

[* *Evening*] Sacrifice of our Prayers and Thanksgivings ; to beg Pardon for all our Sins and Failings, and implore thy all-sufficient Grace, that we may from henceforth serve thee better than we have done, and may daily grow in Grace, and in all Christian Vertues ; and finally, to sue for thy Protection and thy most gracious Favour, both for our selves and all Men.

We

We confess, O Lord, we are not worthy to appear before thee, to beg any thing at thy Hands. For thou, O God, lovest Righteousness and hatest Iniquity. Thou requirest Holiness, and art perfect in all thy ways.

But we are miserable and wretched Creatures, who have not minded our Duty as we ought to have done, nor regarded thy Word, thy Promises nor thy Threatings, but have often been so unreasonable as to slight thy Commandments, and prefer our Will to thine ; as if we had not believed, that thou knowest what is best for us to do, better than we our selves ; or as if we had not believed that thou
searchest

searchest our ways and knowest all our Thoughts, and wilt judge the World in Righteousness, and reward every Man according to his Works, at the great and last Day, in the which we must all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ, there to receive the things done in our Bodies, according as we shall have done, whether it be good or bad.

To us, O Lord, belongs Shame and Confusion. Everlasting Mi-
sery must inevitably be our Portion, if thou hast not Compassion upon us. For by our Unbelief and Disobedience we have deserved the Flames of Hell, and our Folly and Inconsideration hath plunged us into Destruction.

O good Lord, punish us not in thine Anger. Suffer us not to perish for ever, and fall into the bitter pains of Eternal Death. But give us Grace now to repent, actually and sincerely of all our Sins. And then for the sake of our blessed Saviour, be pleased to accept of our hearty and sincere Repentance. Be merciful unto us, O Lord, be merciful unto us, who are grieved for our Transgressions, and are ashamed that we have offended thee.

Help us to contract such holy Dispositions, that we may obtain the Salvation of our Souls. Give us thy Holy Spirit, we humbly beseech thee, that we may perfectly hate and forsake
all

all Sin, and love and follow after Righteousness and true Holiness ; and that instead of our former Carelessness and Neglect of Religion, we may now become earnest and diligent in learning and practising thy whole Will, being always filled with that Zeal and Devotion, which ought to accompany our Prayers, that we may obtain thy Grace and Benediction.

Give us a true Contrition, O Lord, for all our Sins, a deep Veneration for thy great Name, a profound Humility, a meek, and charitable, and contented Spirit ; and entire Trust and Dependence upon thy all-wise Providence ; and a Christian Hope that may purifie us as thou art pure.

Give

Give us Grace to be always prepared against all that shall happen unto us in this World, resigning our selves entirely into thy Hands.

Give us the Wisdom that is from above, which is pure, peaceable, gentle and easie to be intreated, full of Mercy, and of good Fruits.

O give us that Peace which the World cannot give, and which surpasseth all Understanding, and fill our Hearts with that blessed Joy, which is a continual Feast, and a perpetual Comfort, and is no where to be found, but in a holy Mind, and a good Conscience.

And

And particularly, we pray thee, give us a due sense of all thy Benefits, that we may never be so ungrateful as to forget how many good things we have received from thee.

Blessed be thou, O good God, for all thy Temporal and Spiritual Blessings. Blessed be thou that thou hast been so good and kind to us, notwithstanding all our Provocations; that we are still alive, and that thou hast preserved us to this Hour, and hast waited for our Repentance with so much Patience and Long-forbearance.

And for ever blessed be thy good Name, for the inestimable Hope thou hast set before us, by
the

the Mediation of thy Son our Saviour, whom thou hast sent to make Propitiation for all true Penitents, and to bless us, and lead us into the way of Happiness, in turning every one of us from his Sins ; who therefore has brought Life and Immortality to light through the Gospel, and hath so powerfully called us to Glory and Vertue, by exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these we might be Partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the Corruption that is in the World through Lust.

O Infinite Goodness, to snatch us from Death, and lead us in the way of Eternal Life ! How shall we escape, if we neglect that great Salvation ? Good God,
since

since the Blessed Jesus shed his precious Blood, to redeem us from all Iniquity, that he might deliver us from this present evil World, to make us New Creatures, holy and pure, to live with thee eternally in Heaven : O may we become a peculiar People unto thee, zealous of all good Works, that through our Vileness, we make not the Blood of thy Son ineffectual to the saving of our Souls, and so loose the Benefits of his Redemption ! May we ever submit our selves unto thee, and live soberly, justly, and godly in this present World, and work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling, till we arrive at last to a happy Death, and remit our Spirits into thy Hands.

Suffer

Suffer us not, O Lord, to lust after evil things, to fix our Hearts and place our Affections upon the things of this World, nor to be restless and impatient for any Enjoyment of it. Make us more and more sensible of the Uncertainty and Vanity of all worldly things, and of our own Unworthiness, of the least Good we enjoy, that we may be content to want the Pleasures and Comforts of this World, and if it be thy Will, endure patiently its Crosses and Troubles, so at last we do but obtain Heaven, and for ever escape those dreadful and everlasting Torments of Hell, which we have righteously and often deserved.

Have

Have Pity, O Lord, upon the whole Race of Mankind. More particularly, take thy Church, we humbly beseech thee, into thy special Care and Protection. There is none that fighteth for us, but thou, O God. O let not thy Truth fail in the World ; grant that all Men may come to the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we may all serve thee unanimously under his Banner ; and having conquered the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, whilst we follow the Captain of our Salvation, we may enjoy the blessed Effects of that glorious Victory, in mutual Love and universal Charity, and so attain to the Felicity of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Bless

Bless and protect our Sovereign, whom thou hast set over us. Defend him in all Dangers, and give him good Success against his Enemies, and the Enemies of our holy Religion. Bless and preserve our gracious Queen, and the Royal Family. Grant to all that are put in Authority under them, that they may truly and indifferently minister Justice, to the Punishment of Wickedness and Vice, and to the Maintenance of thy true Religion and Vertue. Bless all those that minister unto us the Word of Life, that they may save themselves, and those that hear them.

Be good and gracious, we beseech thee, to all our Relations, our Friends, and Benefactors.

Pour

Pour thy Blessings upon this whole Family, and all those among whom we live. Put thy Fear and thy Love in our Hearts, that we may live comfortably, like Brethren and Christians, one with another.

Have mercy, O good Lord, upon all that are in Trouble, Sorrow, Need, Sicknes, or any other Adversity, and those especially to whom our Prayers are due, succour and relieve them, comfort them with the Hopes of a better and eternal Life, and fit them for that blessed Life.

Pardon our Enemies, give us Grace to love them and do good unto them, and them Grace to repent, that we may all live better than we have done for the
time

time past, that we may all be Partakers of thy Salvation. O give us Grace daily to amend what is amiss in us, that we may go on unto Perfection, and may be so happy as to enjoy the Pleasures of divine Love and Holiness to Eternity.

Take us all this Day, [Night]
O Lord, into thy good and mighty Protection.

[* Give us Grace to do and undertake nothing, but what we are sure is agreeable

** That is to be said in the Morning, but omitted at Night.*

to thy Will, and to thy Glory, and the Salvation of our Souls; and then let thy Blessing be upon all our Endeavours. O may we so live, that we may be always prepared for Death.]

* *This to be
said at Night.*

[* Grant us a comfortable Rest and Sleep, that we may be the better fit for our Duty the next Day. And give us Grace, O Lord, when we lie down in our Beds, always to remember that the time will shortly come, when we shall lie down in our Graves; that by serious thoughts and a holy Life we may timely prepare for our Death.] So that whenever it comes, we may not feel the Horrors and Torments of a guilty Mind, but may be fit and content to leave this World, and looking upon Death only as a Passage to a far better, we may receive it with that Resolution and Constancy as becomes them that hope for Eternal Life.

Grant

Grant this, O most merciful
Father, for the Blessed Jesus his
sake, who has taught us, when
we pray, thus to say,

Our Father, &c.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus
Christ, and the Love of God,
and the Fellowship of the Holy
Ghost, be with us all ever-
more. *Amen.*

T H E
 RECAPITULATION,
 WITH A
Prayer and an Exhortation
 TO ALL
Who desire to lead Christian Lives,
to be constant in PRAYER.

Repentance is a change of Mind, that shews it self to be read by all our Actions, which then are contrary to our former Practices.

Nothing absolutely can be Repentance, in religious Matters, but an actual forsaking of Sin, *ceasing to do evil, and learning to*

to do well, Isa. i. 16. 17. and contracting all the Habits of Vertue.

Christianity is a state of Purity and Holiness. It is Repentance perfected, and an entire Conformity to the Will of God.

The three general Heads of the Christian Religion, are

Piety towards God,
Justice towards all Men,
And Sobriety in respect of our selves.

That is *the Kingdom of God*, or *the Kingdom of Heaven*, and that Heavenly Constitution and Government which is agreeable to the Nature of God, and is as much unalterable as his Nature.

It is therefore impossible for a Man to be a Christian, that is a

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faithful Subject of *the kingdom of Heaven*, if he has not repented of all his Sins ; since to be a Christian is *to live soberly, righteously and godly*, Tit. 2. 11, 12, 13, 14. from a Principle of Faith in Jesus Christ, in Obedience to his Commands, and in Expectation of his Promises.

No Doctrine can be more antichristian, more contrary to, nor more destructive of the Design of the Gospel, than such as encourage Vice, or allow Men in a loose way of living.

They are infinitely mistaken, who fancy the Essence of Religion to consist in Speculation and not in Practice. Saving Faith is an operative Faith, *a faith that worketh by charity*, Gal. 5. 6. The end of Revelation is our *Sanctification*, 1 Thess. 4. 1, 2,

3; &c. The turning us away from our iniquities, Acts 3. 26. which otherwise would prove our ruine, Ezek. 18. 30.

It is therefore a gross Error to think there's any thing revealed that has no Influence upon Practice, and is not designed and conducive to the Conversion of the World, and the Amendment of our Manners. Those then that undervalue and vilifie Morality, vilifie and undervalue the Christian Faith and Religion. We see plainly in Scripture that the end of Faith is Holiness (it is required to no other end, than that *believing we might have life*, John 20. 31. Which is not to be attained unto *without holiness*, for *without it no man shall see the Lord*, Heb. 11. 14. and none but *the just shall live by faith*,

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Hebr. 10. 38. For *that which is altogether just, we must follow, and we must seek good, and do God's commandments that we may live*, Dent. 16. 20. Amos 5. 14. Matth. 19. 17. Luk. 10. 28. and true Morality is true Religion.

For true Morality is an exact Conformity of our Lives and Actions, of our Thoughts, Words and Deeds to the eternal Laws of right Reason, naturally (that is by God himself) imprinted upon our Consciences, and as it were reprinted, and that more deeply by the Gospel of his Son.

Our grand Business therefore, is to study from our Duty (from a Principle of Faith) to have it perfect, and to practise it accordingly. As we have any serious
Con-

Concern for our Souls, we must neglect nothing that is necessary and conducive to that end, to the purifying (that is) of our Spirits, and making us holy. We must prosecute the means of Grace with all the Earnestness and Diligence imaginable. For it is but a folly to pretend to the Name of Christians, if we do not live according to the Rules of Christianity, and do not govern ourselves according to the Laws of *the kingdom of Heaven.*

Repentance is but the Preparative to Christianity. He that intends to live the Devil's Subject, as long as he can enjoy his Life and Health, (though he is loath to have his Portion with the Devil in the other World, and designs to repent upon his Death,

bed is resolved not to be a Christian whilst he lives.

The Design of the Christian Religion is to make Men as Good and Holy, as it is possible for Men to be. And our blessed Saviour has taught us expressly, that it is not the crying, *Lord, Lord*, will serve to enter into the kingdom of Heaven, but the doing of the will of God, Matth. 7. 21.

As we desire then to be admitted one Day into Heaven, Let us from this Moment conform to its Divine Laws, and let us detest and abhor all those Antichristian Traditions, which make the commandments of God of none effect, Matth. 15. 6.

God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. 1 Thess. 4. 7.

In

In particular, let all that shall be willing to strive to enter into the Gates of Righteousness, and shall be perswaded of the Obligation and Necessity of a good Life, be constant in Prayer.

Prayer is not only a Duty of Religion, which we cannot omit without a defiance of Christ's Precepts and Authority, and a profest Contempt of *that great salvation, which was spoken by the Lord*, Hebr. 2. 3. But it is also the best means in the World to become truly religious.

A Man is never entirely reformed, till a new Principle governs his Thoughts, and nothing makes that Principle so strong, as frequent Addresses to God, and serious and deep Meditations of his Nature and Will, of all the
Benefits

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Benefits we have received, and do still receive daily from him, the Engagements and Obligations we are in to serve and obey him, the great Neglect we've been guilty of in a Business so vastly concerning, and how much reason there is to set more earnestly about it than ever.

The Effects of such Addresses to God, and of such Meditations, besides the Grace of God we draw upon us thereby, (which is promised to our Prayers) are very sensible; they make very evidently the Apprehensions of God, and the Obligations of Religion have a deeper Root, and a stronger Influence on us.

We must not imagine God demands our Prayers and Thanksgivings, as if he received

ved any Benefit from them, any Addition to his Happiness, was fond to hear himself entreated and commended, or was not of himself willing to do us good, but must be overcom'd, as it were through meer Importunity, by many repeated Addresses.

But Experience teaches us how apt they are to create in us a vigorous sence of God, our Duty, and Eternal Interest, and how necessary to preserve it; since any considerable neglect therein bereaves us by degrees of that devout and zealous Temper, which is the chief Root of all true Holiness and Vertue.

It was not for nothing our Blessed Saviour spent so many hours, both day and night, in Meditation and Prayer.

It

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It was not for nothing he set so good an Example to us, and gave us an exprefs Command, *to watch and pray alwaies, Luke 21. 36.* and his Apostle after him, exhorts us to *continue in Prayer, and watch in the same with Thanksgiving, Col. 4. 2.*

Would not one guess Christians, after this, to be the most devout men in the World, and the most constant in Prayer? Yet 'tis nothing so.

He had not the advantage of the Gospel of Christ, that sang unto God; *I have remembred thy Name, O Lord, in the night, and have kept thy Law; seven times a day do I praise thee; in the night-season I am not silent; I call to remembrance my Song in the night; I commune with mine own Heart, and my Spirit makes dili-*

*diligent search, Psal. 119. 55.
& 164. Ps. 22. 2. & 77. 6.*

Even the *Mahumetans*, we are told, fearing that a whole Night would cause too great an Interval between their *Devotions*, interrupt their *Sleep*, and rise constantly every night to spend some of that time in *Prayer*.

- But we, who have the Son of God for our Master and Teacher, nay, for our Guide and Pattern; we that are commanded to *pray without ceasing*, *1 Thess. 5. 17.* that is, constantly; how cold and careless are we in the performance of this Duty! There are but few of those that call themselves Christians, will spend so much as an hour in the day in God's Service: If ever they pray God,
'tis

'tis but by Fits : And how uneasie and unattentive are the most part of them all the while ! Strange ! We scandalize our Neighbours, and those we live and converse with, often perhaps in a day. It would make some reparation, if presently after we gave them the Marks of our Sorrow and Repentance, by our Devotion, and the constancy, earnestness, and fervency of our Prayers : But, alas ! how little is this minded ! What makes us so dull and sottish in the things that concern the Service of God, and the eternal Salvation of our Souls, when we are so sagacious, so earnest and vigilant about poor momentany concerns ?

For

For shame let's no longer be so very childish and foolish : If we'll act seriously and rationally, to mean and do as we profess, we must either renounce the Name of Christ, or become *new Creatures*, that we may be holy, as our Blessed Lord is holy, and as his Divine Religion indispensably obligeth us to be.

There are a great many that name the Name of *C H R I S T*, who rise, eat and drink, follow their Worldly Business, lye down at night, and scarce ever think of God all the while, tho they cannot subsist one moment without Him, and they receive from Him daily, nay, hourly innumerable Benefits. They pretend to be the Disciples and Followers of the Son of God, and yet they are perfect Strangers with God.

It's

It's no wonder therefore there is so little Zeal, so little Charity, and so much Malice and Wickedness, to be seen among those that are called Christians : But it is not to be question'd, we should soon see, with the Blessing of God, that primitive Christian Purity break forth, and shine again in the midst of us, if Men would be perswaded to use constant Devotions in their Families.

Many excuse themselves, as if they were not able, or had not the Time and Opportunity to perform them : Yet they can find the time and opportunity to meet together for their Repasts, Morning and Evening : And why not to pray God, and consult his Word ? Are the Concerns of this World and this
Body

Body so precious, as to be more worth than our Souls ?

And is it not strange, that those that have the Word of God in their Hands, and have often heard it read and expounded, should not know what great Obligation God has laid, and daily heaps on them, for which they are to thank him, and praise his Holy Name; what Failings they have been subject to, which they are to beg Pardon for, and pray against, that they may never be guilty of them ; and what things they stand in need of, which they are to beg of God ? And do they not know we are to pray one for another, 1 Tim. 2. 1. and are commanded to make Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and Thanksgivings for all men ?

Let

Let none think to excuse himself because he is not eloquent : *Out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh, Luke 6. 45.* He that cannot pray, cannot be a Christian. There's no man, tho' never so mean, but can reason pertinently of his Business. It is a sign he doth not look upon Religion as his Business, that can say nothing of it.

But, are Scholars only, and Learned men, commanded to pray? Or, is it a Duty incumbent upon All? And is it our Words and Phrases God looks at, and not the pious Dispositions of our Souls rather?

In fine, Has not our Church put most excellent Prayers into our Hands? And have we minded them so little all this while, as to remember nothing of them?

That

That those that shall meet with these Papers may be absolutely without Excuse, I conclude with a Prayer, that may serve both for Morning and Evening. They that have so much Piety, as not to think that time lost, which is spent in Devotion, will not complain of its length : And as for them that are otherwise dispos'd, it's no matter what they shall think of it.

I have but one thing to add by way of Caution, to those that shall use this or any other Form of Prayer, that is, To take care they let not their Tongue run faster than their Understanding, but (considering to whom it is they speak, namely, to Him who is to be worshipped in *Spirit and in Truth*) let their
Hearts

134 *The Recapitulation.*

Hearts ever accompany their Words; and then they may be sure, that *the LORD*, (who is far from the Wicked) will bear the Prayer of the Righteous, *Prov. 15. 29.*

FINIS.

By Mistake at the Press, the Recapitulation, which should have followed next after the Discourse, &c. is put after the Prayer.

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